



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety joins the 'One Text or Call Could Wreck It All' campaign

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 2, 2012) – In an effort to make roadways safer, the Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) has joined the “One Text or Call Could Wreck It All” campaign sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in honor of Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April. The KOHS has pledged to help spread the message that distracted drivers are not only a danger to themselves, but everyone else on the road.

“We all know that talking on our cell phones while driving is distracting, but that doesn’t stop most people from continuing to do it,” said KOHS Director Bill Bell. “This effort is intended to educate our community about the dangers of cell phone use and other distractions while driving. We hope that once people see the statistics and realize the danger involved, they will change their driving habits to help protect themselves, their families, and others on the road.”

According to NHTSA, in 2009 alone, nearly 5,500 people were killed and a half million more individuals were injured in distracted driving crashes. That same year, 20 percent of injury crashes involved reports of distracted driving.

While anything that takes your eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, or mind off the task of driving is a hazard, there is heightened concern about the risks of texting while driving because it combines all three types of distraction – visual, manual and cognitive.

The national distracted driving effort focuses on ways to change the behavior of drivers through legislation, enforcement, public awareness and education – the same activities that have curbed drunken driving and increased seat belt use.

“Every driver in Kentucky has a role in this effort,” said Bell. “However, we especially want to reach teen drivers because we know that statistically, the under-20 age group had the highest proportion of distracted drivers involved in fatal crashes.”

To target these younger drivers, the KOHS will run public service announcements on Hulu.com and Paducah’s WPSD-TV featuring Paducah native Hillary Coltharp. Hillary lives with brain trauma sustained in 2007 due to a texting-while-driving crash. Click [here](#) to view the announcements on the KOHS homepage. Facebook ads will also be linked to a blog by Hillary’s mother, Shawn Coltharp, at <http://hillarycoltharp.xanga.com/>.

In addition, the KOHS is encouraging schools to promote the “no texting while driving” pledge also available on the KOHS homepage.

The goal of this campaign is simple – save lives by getting drivers to remember that “One Text or Call Could Wreck It All.”

“Distracted driving is an epidemic on America’s roadways, and we’re doing our part to help put an end to it,” said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. “Texting and cell phone use while driving is extremely dangerous, and we know simply getting drivers to turn their phones off when they get behind the wheel will make our roads significantly safer. Efforts like this one will help us put an end to distracted driving, and we encourage your support of this program to help save lives in your community.”

For more information about distracted driving, please visit www.distraction.gov.

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